



Housing Plan Implementation Committee

Date: January 7, 2021

Time: 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Minutes

Present: Ben Bradlow, Karen Kelleher, Jenny Raitt, Michelle Shortsleeve, Patricia Worden, Erin Zwirko.

Guests: Len Diggins, Roshima Williams.

The Committee discussed the real estate transfer fee warrant article. Erin noted that the Committee in December wanted to resubmit the article. Previously the warrant article was filed by the HPIC. Erin also noted that she is participating in the Real Estate Transfer Fee Coalition, a group of municipal representative and other advocates. Erin summarized that the group is seeking a state representative and a state senator to file the consensus bill to establish a local option for the upcoming legislative session. Erin also noted that the various home rule petitions carry over to the next legislative session. Karen noted that the Committee should think about other options for funding the affordable housing trust.

Karen also mentioned that she is interested in creating a process for tenants to organize and receive a right of first refusal when multifamily buildings are listed for sale. Patricia agreed that it is very important for the town to assist those who are at risk of displacement of eviction.

Michelle asked the Economic Development bill that was just passed by the Legislature and is awaiting the Governor's signature. Jenny and Karen provided an overview of this bill. In addition to adjusting the vote threshold for certain zoning articles, for which the accessory dwelling unit article could benefit from, there are a number of new funding sources for affordable housing development. Karen noted that the bill includes a local option to create a pathway for tenants to purchase multifamily buildings through a right of first refusal, eviction record sealing, and creating a tenant seat on housing authority boards.

Turning back to the warrant article language for the real estate transfer fee, Karen moved to refile the article. Patricia seconded the motion. All members voted in favor via a roll call vote.

The Committee discussed possible outreach including an informational forum like was held for the affordable housing trust fund. There was also suggestion for a joint Select Board and ARB meeting to review the real estate transfer fee. At a prior joint meeting of these two boards, there appeared to be support for this concept. Erin and Jenny indicated that they would work on developing these two suggestions in order to receive public feedback about the range of provisions recommended and the exemptions recommended. Ben suggested that Arlington should be on the leading edge of real estate transfer fees. While this topic may be more controversial than the affordable housing trust fund, there may be some momentum for Arlington pursue a home rule petition for the fee.

The Committee discussed other articles, including the tenant purchase of buildings and sources of revenue for the affordable housing trust. Karen noted cannabis revenue, short term rental fees, and inclusionary zoning payments. Jenny indicated that the cannabis revenue and short term rental fees can already go to the affordable housing trust fund as was voted by Town Meeting through an internal transfer with the Comptroller. The Committee had previously discussed CPA funding. Ben asked if there are any kind of bonds that could support affordable housing development with interest rates being low. Len asked about the scale of funding that would be beneficial or effective for affordable housing development. Erin indicated that it would depend on the trustees' action plan, but continual funding would be better than a one-time infusion of funding. The Committee discussed how a financial plan should be included as part of the action plan that the affordable housing trust fund trustees would be charged with completing.

The Committee discussed holding another meeting in January prior to the submittal deadline for warrant articles. Erin indicated that she would poll the group via email on a date.

Patricia recommended an edit to the December 3 meeting summary. She indicated that the Town Manager Act prohibits Len from participating as a member in the Committee. Patricia made a motion to approve the summary as amended. The motion was seconded by Karen. All members present voted in favor via a roll call vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.